



LEROY D. BACA, SHERIFF

County of Los Angeles
Sheriff's Department Headquarters
4700 Ramona Boulevard
Monterey Park, California 91754-2169



February 21, 2006

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Supervisors:

SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT JAIL HOUSING AND SECURITY PLAN

The recent spate of inmate violence in our jails has caused us to re-examine Department policies and protocols concerning facility security – including inmate classification, prisoner housing, and personnel staffing levels.

As your Board is well aware, tough economic times and fiscal difficulties in consecutive years, beginning with the 2001-02 Fiscal Year, led to the complete closures of Pitchess Detention Center (PDC) - South Facility, Century Regional Detention Facility (CRDF), and Biscailuz Recovery Center (BRC). In 2003-04, additional budget cuts forced partial dorm closures at North County Correctional Facility (NCCF), PDC - North Facility, and PDC - East Facility. In 2004-05, with the support of your Board, we began a systematic re-opening of jail facilities. With the exception of BRC and a portion of PDC - South Facility, all of the previously closed jails and housing areas have been re-opened or designated for use (e.g., CRDF).

Staffing has been an issue. We hired nearly 600 deputy sheriffs in 2005, but lost almost 500 to attrition. Of concern, of course, is the number of young deputies who left our Department, lured away by shorter commute times, affordable housing, instant patrol opportunities, and better compensation packages. Thanks to your Board, we have expanded our recruitment, hiring, and training efforts, and we expect to hire 1,000 deputies in 2006 and 1,000 in 2007. If successful, this will provide us with greater jail staffing and increased personnel in patrol and detective divisions; additionally, the amount of time served during an initial custody assignment will be greatly reduced.

A Tradition of Service

Notwithstanding funding and staffing issues, our biggest challenge is to provide a safe jail environment for approximately 20,000 inmates – most of whom are violent criminals and gang members – in aging facilities that were generally designed to house drunk drivers, petty thieves, and other non-violent offenders.

As previously reported to your Board, steps have been taken or are being taken to enhance jail security:

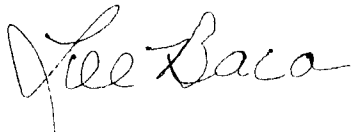
1. We are updating our inmate classification and housing system to include state-of-the-art computer software designed to identify and separate the most violent inmates from general population. The system should be in place by March 2006.
2. We are proceeding with your Board's recommendation to have an independent security audit of our entire jail system to further determine where we can improve jail safety. A Request for Information was posted on the Department's website in January with a response due date of March 3, 2006.
3. We are researching new technology which monitors inmate movement – Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) – and, in the near future, may seek funding from your Board to conduct a pilot project at a selected jail facility.
4. In August 2005, closed circuit television (CCTV) became operational at Pitchess Detention Center - East Facility. The cameras record activity 24-hours-per day, 7-days-per week, and have an archiving capacity of 50+ days. Cameras are no doubt a deterrent to criminal behavior, and we are exploring the feasibility (cost) of installing CCTV systems at some or all of our other jail facilities.
5. On March 25, 2006, we will begin moving female inmates from Twin Towers Correctional Facility (TTCF) Tower II to CRDF. We expect the movement to be completed within two days. Immediately following, we will begin necessary renovations at TTCF to prepare to house some of our most violent inmates. Our ability to house security level 8 and 9 inmates will greatly increase, as Tower II has the capacity to house 1,344 inmates in 672 two-man, hard-lock cells. We anticipate the transfer of inmates into Tower II to begin in April and be completed by July or August 2006.

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Finally, notwithstanding the findings and recommendations of the impending independent security audit, we are in the process of preparing a proposal that suggests major changes to the way we currently house prisoners. It will not be a pie-in-the-sky solution – rather it is what we believe to be an optimal plan designed to address the myriad of problems posed by our current configuration of housing. It is a plan that is not cheap (i.e., it includes the re-opening of Sybil Brand Institute and the transfer of mental observation inmates to PDC), but one we believe will allow us to best utilize the facilities we have for the safety and security of all concerned. I expect this plan will be completed and submitted to your Board by March 14, 2006.

I am available to answer your questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Leroy D. Baca". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

LEROY D. BACA
SHERIFF